

tives, only the theatre survived World War 2. The rest of the special provisions died an early death due to a variety of factors. O’Keeffe explains the implications of changes in the Soviet nationality policy in the mid-1930s when the status of small minority languages began to be eroded in favor of Russian. This triggered a rapid decline in the provision and maintenance of Romani schools and didactic material. But she also demonstrates the haphazard manner in which Soviet officials dealt with the special needs of the Roma. It seems that the regime possessed only a vague notion of the objective state of the Romani population, including its size, dispersal, and differentiation. On the one hand, this ignorance aided the Russka activists in exerting some influence on government policies, but it also contributed to a high degree of arbitrariness in official evaluations of progress made by the same activists. O’Keeffe presents compelling evidence of some of the key aims of the Soviet regime – especially the sedentarization and collectivization drive – having rested almost solely on the activists’ shoulders without the necessary institutional support, let alone financial backing.

This is a meticulously researched and well-written work. The material on which it is based consists predominantly of Russian archival records and memoirs of some of the key activists. It is perhaps the nature of the data which explains why so little attention is given to the dissenters among the Roma who failed to see the need to embrace Sovietization. For an anthropologist it is especially intriguing to read O’Keeffe’s fascinating account of the typecasting of the Vlax Roma as an illegible segment of Soviet society that had to be “opened up” and transformed. But we learn little about the ways in which the Vlax may have resisted such pressure.

O’Keeffe is very good at showing the proverbial bigger picture within which we ought to locate the attempted Sovietization of Russian Roma. This is done by way of helpful references to literature addressing the transformation of post-revolutionary Russia and, specifically, to the parallel experiences of other small nationalities. It is probably asking too much of a work devoted to a specific era in a specific region to venture beyond those confines in the search of some transnational patterns and explanations. But O’Keeffe’s assertion in the concluding chapter that the Soviet Union was unique in giving the Roma citizenship and full participation in society – on the condition of assimilation – begs the question of how singular the treatment of Soviet Roma may have been? And this brings to mind all kinds of interesting parallels, such as the role of nobility-sponsored music ensembles in the forging of an assimilated, and well-integrated, Gypsy élite in 18th- and 19th-century Hungary, the attention given to “Gypsy schools” in post-World War I Czechoslovakia, or the juxtaposition of “criminal itinerants” vs. benign settled Roma in much of prewar Europe. But these musings should not detract from the value of O’Keeffe’s stimulating contribution.

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Pechenkina, Kate, and Marc Oxenham (eds.): *Bio-archaeology of East Asia*. Movement, Contact, Health. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 512 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4427-9. Price: \$ 99.95

The recent rise of East Asia at the global scale has not only occurred within the political, technological, and economic sectors but also in the scientific. With China leading the way, these advancements have been progressing at a steady pace due to financial support from the government and encouragement of foreign collaboration. Pechenkina and Oxenham’s first book is a welcomed compendium to a large anthropological body of research, which had previously lacked data from this historically and culturally diverse region, covering the areas from the western Inner Asian steppes east to Japan, and from Mongolia in the north, south to the tropical Malay Archipelago. The volume’s principal foci are the themes of population migration/spread, intergroup contact, and human health throughout East Asia within a timeframe spanning from the Neolithic to the Medieval periods. The editors bring together a diverse group of scholars working in several countries including Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Thailand among others. Evaluating geographical and temporal health trends in such a vast territory is a difficult task due to the substantial heterogeneity and complex population history of human groups that have inhabited these regions, not to mention the cultural differences resulting from the local material and food resources available to them.

Readers interested in learning about how biological anthropology developed in China and Japan will be pleased to read the book’s first chapter, which provides a comprehensive overview of the history of the field, framed within the turbulent political backdrop of the late 19th and 20th centuries. This chapter introduces the reader to seminal figures within vertebrate paleontology and human skeletal biology listing how their scholarly contribution has influenced these fields up to today. In the following chapter, the editors set the stage for the rest of the volume by discussing the interaction between humans and their surroundings across East Asia’s various ecological zones, starting with human colonization of the region, initial subsistence strategies and the eventual spread of cereal grain agriculture and animal husbandry in both mainland and island environments.

The main corpus of the book is divided into two parts. The first part, “Biological Indicators of Population Histories in East Asia,” consists of studies of population movement and contact via craniometric approaches in Mongolia (Dashtseveg) and territories bordering the Sea of Japan (Pietruszewsky), as well as combined craniometrics and dental nonmetrics in South China, Japan, and Southeast Asia (Matsumura and Oxenham). Nonmetric approaches are also employed to assess past and present variation in Mongolian and Northeast Asian crania (Myagmar), as well as Chinese and Mongolian teeth (Lee). Suzuki also examines the eastward spread of agricultural groups in the Neolithic and Eneolithic periods by identifying and diagnosing cases of tuberculosis infection in China, Korea, and Japan.

The second part of the book, titled “Community Health,” comprises of diachronic evaluations of health and disease trends in different mainland and insular populations across East Asia as a consequence of subsistence shifts, interpersonal conflict, or distance from the center of political power. Skeletal analyses include nutritional indicators of stress from mean adult stature, sexual dimorphism, and linear growth, as well as diet composition from oral health and patterns of dental attrition. Authors examined systemic stress during childhood development via frequencies of cribra orbitalia, porotic hyperostosis, and linear enamel hypoplasias. Mechanical stress assessments were carried out by studying the incidence of degenerative conditions of the spine and appendicular joints. Lastly, trauma and infectious disease in the form of periosteal reaction were also evaluated as population-wide indicators of relative quality of life.

In the last chapter, the editors sum up chapter conclusions in the context of migration, cultural interaction, and community health across this ecologically diverse territory. They remark the difficulty of distinguishing general, diachronic trends of stress and disease, especially because skeletal collections from large parts of Central and South China have not yet been studied. Further issues include population movement in Northwest China during the Neolithic resulting in genetic heterogeneity, and also whether northern populations provided genetic contributions to Southeast Asian peoples. These issues and many others still remain to be solved.

The most ambitious chapter is that of Pechenkina, Ma, and Fan, who examined population health by utilizing previously published data from 48 sites in North China, Japan, and Thailand. Such a large-scale comparative article is groundbreaking in many ways, as research in East Asia is often published within smaller journals in the regional language and thus goes largely unnoticed by the larger scientific community. In their study, the authors identify different health trajectories according to ecological setting and subsistence strategy. They posit that higher sexual dimorphism over time across all regions was the result of increasingly diversified gender roles rather than a combination of improved health status and reduced effect of female systemic stress buffers. They also confirm previous studies that assert differential carious rates in populations according to the type of cereal grain being consumed. Lastly, they identify decreasing community health in the Yellow River basin of China with the adoption of agriculture. This differs from Southeast Asian sites, where stature instead increased over time, or in Japan, where rates of acquired anemia remained constant during this period, although oral health was affected.

One particular issue I encountered with this volume was that the research papers were originally presented during the 2007 conference of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists, which considerably predates its release six years later. Thus, I was disappointed to discover whilst examining the book’s bibliographies that three chapters had not been updated since their original versions and a further two chapters only received a minor update in 2008 from their authors who cited themselves.

Moreover, I should also note that biological anthropology has evolved through the years, building on previous, time-tested methodologies and adopting cutting-edge approaches from other fields of study. These methods include ways to assess diet composition from carbon and nitrogen stable isotopes, discern population admixture from ancient DNA, or interpret routine activities from biomechanical analyses. However, although these techniques have been employed to examine human remains in East and Southeast Asia for several years and were reviewed by Pechenkina and Oxenham, Lee and Pietrusewsky, none of the authors in the book employed them in their analyses to strengthen their conclusions.

Nonetheless, I should emphasize the essential place of “Bioarchaeology of East Asia” within the field of osteoarchaeology, as it is the first compilation of health and population history studies to focus exclusively in East Asia. With this publication, the editors successfully generate awareness of scholarly research on human remains in this region. Readers interested in larger-scale trends of human migration and development of civilization in this region will be pleased to notice the underlying theme of the book, which attempts to tackle important topics related to the dynamics of population spread, cultural contact, subsistence shifts, and how each is connected to regional diachronic health trends across a region that has recently advanced to the forefront within the global scientific community. It is my hope that this volume motivates future works that focus on answering the questions posed by the editors as well as presenting skeletal research in regions that could not be extensively covered within this volume.

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Peres, Tanya M. (ed.): *Trends and Traditions in Southeastern Zooarchaeology*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014. 224 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4927-4. Price: \$ 79.95.

This volume on southeastern zooarchaeology is an effort to integrate the growing diversity of approaches for analyzing and interpreting faunal remains. As Peres notes in her introductory chapter on the development and practice of the subdiscipline, southeastern zooarchaeology has made remarkable strides over the last 50 years, eschewing the presence/absence species lists of the early practitioners for lines of inquiry that, as presented in the case studies here, include “the use of archaeofaunal remains to understand past socioeconomic systems and food preferences, the roles of animals in domestic and ritual life, and the utility of animals to aid in interpreting past environments” (9). In line with the broad range of themes, the individual case studies also encompass a considerable amount of time that spans from the Archaic period through the Civil War, and focus on both vertebrate and invertebrate remains.

The majority of the chapters conceptually and analytically build on the tradition of zooarchaeology fostered by Elizabeth Wing and Paul Parmalee, to whom this collection is dedicated. Although primarily descriptive, Walker and Windham’s contribution on Woodland and Mississippian